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EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT.

The latest available statistics from various sources, which offer some indication of the movement of Employment and Unemployment throughout Australia, have been issued by the Commonwealth Statistician.

I. INDEX OF EMPLOYMENT.

In view of the smallness of the proportion of wage-earners covered by the trade union returns as to unemployment, and of doubts as to whether they were indicative of the degree of unemployment among all wage-earners, it was decided at the Premiers' Conference in June, 1933, that State Statisticians should co-operate with the Commonwealth Statistician in compiling an Index of Employment by using data from the Census of 30th June, 1933, as the starting point.

The report of the Conference referred to the matter in the following terms:-

"The Commonwealth called attention to the need for a more reliable system of measuring unemployment in Australia. The present figures were based on returns from trade unions which cover only 20% of the total employment. The degree of reliance to be placed upon the figures was uncertain. A direct quarterly census of unemployment was estimated to cost £100,000 per annum. Failing a good direct measure of unemployment, the best resource was a measure based on information obtained from employers and other sources."

The work of collecting adequate sample returns of employment was undertaken by the State Statisticians, and it is possible from the data thus obtained to make available progress results for each of the States and for Australia covering sections of employment, and indexes of employment covering all sections of employment in New South Wales and Queensland.

Indexes of employment in factories and in retail shops are shown below for all States and for Australia.

ANNUAL INDEX OF FACTORY EMPLOYMENT.

Base Year 1928-29 = 100.

	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania	TOTAL
Number of Employees in 1928-29	180,806	156,568	45,031	36,807	20,804	10,466	450,482
1925-26	94	95	106	106	99	97	97
1926-27	99	101	98	112	93	101	100
1927-28	99	100	99	106	98	106	100
1928-29	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
1929-30	90	96	95	87	94	103	93
1930-31	71	80	84	65	70	84	75
1931-32	70	82	80	65	64	86	75
1932-33	77	92	83	72	71	88	82
1933-34	85	100	89	80	78	93	90
1934-35	97	(a)108	(a) 94	91	(a) 85	(a)102	(a) 100

(a) Preliminary figures subject to revision.

Taking the year 1928-29 as the base year (=100) the indexes shown in the above table indicate the course of factory employment during the past ten years, and the progress through the depression years and subsequent periods of recovery. Without regard to the increase in population, there is evidence that the pre-depression level was reached for Australia as a whole in 1934-35. In Victoria and Tasmania it was

/exceeded

exceeded, while New South Wales at 97 was within 3 per cent. of that level. Queensland came next with 94, followed by South Australia with 91 and Western Australia with 85.

Wage earners dependent on factory employment represent approximately 20 per cent of total persons dependent on employment in the Commonwealth. The relative proportions and the rates of increase in relation to total employment vary between States. Since 1928-29, population has increased on the average by about 5 per cent. over the whole period.

The following table shows the monthly index of factory employment for each State and for Australia during the year ending June, 1935, and for the six months ending December, 1935.

MONTHLY INDEX OF FACTORY EMPLOYMENT - 1934-35-36.

(Base: Average for Year 1928-29 = 100).

Month	New South Wales	Victoria	Queens- land	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania	AUSTRALIA
1934- July ..	90	104	90	84	77	91	93
August	92	105	94	86	80	94	95
September	93	105	96	86	83	95	96
October	96	107	98	88	85	97	98
November	98	109	95	87	84	99	99
December	98	108	92	89	85	102	99
1935- January	95	106	88	90	85	107	97
February	98	110	90	88	88	111	100
March ..	100	112	94	92	89	109	102
April ..	101	111	95	97	91	106	103
May ..	101	109	95	101	91	108	102
June ..	101	109	97	102	90	106	103
July ..	ø 101	109	99	100	87	104	103
August	ø 103	110	99	98	88	105	103
September	ø 105	111	99	102	91	104	105
October	ø 106	114	102	102	92	106	107
November	ø 108	114	104	99	93	108	108
December	ø 110	115	103	102	96	110	109
1936- January	ø 105	-	-	-	-	-	-
February	ø 105	-	-	-	-	-	-

ø Preliminary. Based on sample factories. Subject to revision when complete returns are available.

MONTHLY INDEX OF EMPLOYMENT IN RETAIL STORES.

(Base: July, 1933 = 100)

Month	New South Wales	Victoria	Queensland	South Australia	Western Australia	Tasmania	SIX STATES
1933 - July ..	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
August ..	97	99	99	102	93	101	98
September	99	101	97	102	93	98	99
October ..	99	103	97	99	93	109	100
November ..	102	111	100	100	96	108	104
December ..	113	121	110	108	106	115	114
1934 - January ..	102	109	100	103	108	109	105
February ..	104	108	99	102	99	105	104
March ..	104	109	100	102	98	107	104
April ..	103	108	100	103	100	105	104
May ..	105	108	102	105	101	105	105
June ..	105	109	103	104	100	105	106
July ..	108	109	104	106	104	107	107
August ..	105	109	103	102	102	105	105
September	107	110	103	103	100	106	107
October ..	108	Ø 115	104	108	104	104	109
November ..	110	Ø 122	105	107	104	107	112
December ..	123	Ø 131	116	118	119	119	124
1935 - January ..	109	Ø 117	106	108	109	110	111
February ..	112	Ø 117	106	107	103	108	112
March ..	109	Ø 118	105	107	105	107	111
April ..	111	Ø 117	105	108	103	107	111
May ..	112	Ø 121	106	109	106	107	113
June ..	112	Ø 123	105	111	107	106	114
July ..	116	120	107	107	111	109	115
August ..	113	120	108	109	105	108	113
September	113	123	104	113	106	107	114
October ..	115	128	107	112	106	107	117
November ..	119	131	106	115	109	110	120
December ..	133	145	106	128	123	120	132

Ø The relatively high rate of employment in these months coincides with the Centenary celebrations.

The number of establishments in respect of which returns are obtained are - New South Wales, 533; Victoria, 103; Queensland, 120; South Australia, 35; Western Australia (not stated); Tasmania, 14. No adjustment has been made in the indexes on account of increased population.

INDEXES OF EMPLOYMENT IN NEW SOUTH WALES AND QUEENSLAND.

Working from the basis of the results of the Census of 30th June, 1933, and from compilations made from returns of employers in remitting wages tax, and returns collected from Government Departments, the Government Statistician of New South Wales has prepared an index of employment and unemployment covering all persons dependent on employment in New South Wales. The Director of the Bureau of Industry of Queensland publishes an index of employment and unemployment among men wage and salary earners. The data for this index are derived from information relating to Unemployment Insurance Contributions and other sources. The results are given below -

/NEW SOUTH WALES.

Percentages of Employment and Unemployment - All available wage-earners -
(a) Including and (b) excluding the full-time equivalent of men engaged
part-time on relief works.

Month	Percentage of all who are dependent on and available for employment			
	(a) Including full time equivalent of part-time relief workers		(b) Excluding full time equivalent of part time relief workers	
	Employed	Unemployed	Employed	Unemployed
Census of 30th June, 1933 ..	74.4	25.6	73.5	26.5
1934 - June ..	81.1	18.9	78.0	22.0
1935 - June ..	86.6	13.4	83.7	16.3
July ..	87.2	12.8	84.3	15.7
August ..	88.0	12.0	85.1	14.9
September ..	89.2	10.8	86.5	13.5
October ..	89.6	10.4	87.0	13.0
November ..	90.3	9.7	87.8	12.2
December ..	92.2	7.8	89.7	10.3
1936 - January ..	88.1	11.9	85.9	14.1

The indexes have been adjusted to allow for an estimated increase of 1.2 per cent. per annum in the number of persons dependent on employment. At the Census of 30th June, 1933, 15,142 persons dependent on employment returned themselves as unemployed by reason of illness, accident, etc. or "voluntarily". This number, representing 1.8 per cent. of all persons dependent on employment, is excluded from the above indexes, which relate to percentages of available wage-earners employed and unemployed. The approximate number of persons in private employment was 478,000 in June, 1933; 519,000 in June, 1934; 567,000 in June, 1935, and 590,000 in January, 1936.

QUEENSLAND.

Employment and Unemployment among Men Wage and Salary Earners. (In
terms of full-time employment
and unemployment.)

Period	Percentage		Approximate Number	
	Employed	Unemployed	Employed	Unemployed
Average 1929 ..	89.9	10.1	148,340	16,660
" 1930 ..	86.4	13.6	144,630	22,850
" 1931 ..	77.2	22.8	131,270	38,730
" 1932 ..	77.8	22.2	134,130	38,320
" 1933 ..	79.8	20.2	139,720	35,310
" 1934 ..	84.9	15.1	150,870	26,800
" 1935 ..	89.0	11.0	160,510	19,820
3 months ended -				
June, 1934 ..	85.0	15.0	150,910	26,640
June, 1935 ..	89.9	10.1	162,040	18,170
July " ..	89.1	10.9	160,750	19,680
August " ..	88.8	11.2	160,490	20,170
September, 1935 ..	89.0	11.0	161,060	19,820
October, " ..	90.1	9.9	163,140	17,970
November, " ..	90.6	9.4	164,310	17,020
December, " ..	91.3	8.7	165,840	15,720
January, 1936 ..	91.5	8.5	166,390	15,400

Ø The full-time equivalent of relief work (included as employment) was approximately 8,780 men. Without this work the percentage unemployed would have been 13.3.

The percentages and numbers employed and unemployed have been adjusted for increase in men dependent on employment.

BUILDING PERMITS.

A further index of the relative activity in industry is furnished by Building Permits issued, and the estimated amount to be spent on the proposed buildings and repairs.

The following tables give details of the value of Building Permits issued in the Six Capital Cities and Suburbs of the Commonwealth for the periods shown.

Year		Buildings for Habitation	Buildings for Other Purposes	Alterations and Additions	Total Value All Building Operations
1928-29 (a)	..	£17,455,449	£4,902,928	(b) £1,932,887	£24,291,264
1929-30 (a)	..	11,057,069	3,098,700	(b) 1,741,291	15,897,060
1930-31 (a)	..	1,989,167	1,547,005	(b) 799,245	4,335,417
1931-32	..	1,533,325	1,848,257	1,225,680	4,607,262
1932-33	..	3,185,679	1,503,877	2,161,846	6,851,402
1933-34	..	6,105,369	2,194,162	2,885,378	11,184,909
1934-35	..	9,606,533	3,829,676	4,173,041	17,610,590
Quarter ending -					
March, 1935	..	2,436,466	942,604	1,110,558	4,489,628
June, "	..	2,936,510	1,271,694	1,180,786	5,388,990
September "	..	3,428,704	1,275,712	1,088,729	5,793,145
December "	..	2,779,521	941,246	1,159,741	4,880,508

(a) Exclusive of City of Sydney; (b) Exclusive of Sydney and Suburbs.

BUILDING PERMITS IN CAPITAL CITIES AND SUBURBS OF EACH STATE.

Period	Sydney and Suburbs	Melbourne and Suburbs	Brisbane and Suburbs	Adelaide and Suburbs	Perth and Suburbs	Hobart and Suburbs	TOTAL
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
1928-29 ..	9,715(a)	7,661	2,440	1,807	2,518	150	24,291
1929-30 ..	5,810(a)	5,576	1,414	1,153	1,833	106	15,897
1930-31 ..	1,005(a)	1,434	1,098	314	393	91	4,335
1931-32 ..	995	1,861	876	217	596	62	4,607
1932-33 ..	2,257	2,568	793	400	732	101	6,851
1933-34 ..	4,142	4,218	1,051	617	988	169	11,185
1934-35 ..	7,632	5,604	1,654	1,164	1,354	203	17,611
1935 -							
March Quarter	2,071	1,361	335	333	346	43	4,489
June "	2,388	1,766	521	306	337	71	5,389
September "	2,528	1,788	574	304	505	94	5,793
December "	1,964	1,647	533	359	335	43	4,881

(a) Exclusive of City of Sydney and value of alterations and additions in Sydney and Suburbs.

II. UNEMPLOYMENT, 1st Quarter, 1936.

The figures relating to unemployment among members of Trade Unions are similar to those published quarterly in the past, and are derived from returns furnished by Trade Unions.

The number of trade unionists represented in the returns, from which the following figures have been derived, is normally about half the total. Generally, it may be said that the returns of unemployment include little information about rural employment, so that the percentage results given herein do not vary greatly with the season, though the food preserving industries have some effect in this connection. The total unemployment in the country, however, may be affected a good deal by the crop seasons.

The percentages of unemployment among members of reporting Trade Unions for Australia as a whole for each quarter from the 2nd Quarter of 1932, when unemployment was at its maximum, to the 1st Quarter of 1936, are as follows:-

/AUSTRALIA.

AUSTRALIA.

1932 - 2nd Quarter	..	30.0 per cent.
4th "	..	28.1 " "
1933 - 1st "	..	26.5 " "
2nd "	..	25.7 " "
3rd "	..	25.1 " "
4th "	..	23.0 " "
1934 - 1st "	..	21.9 " "
2nd "	..	20.9 " "
3rd "	..	20.4 " "
4th "	..	18.8 " "
1935 - 1st "	..	18.6 " "
2nd "	..	17.8 " "
3rd "	..	15.9 " "
4th "	..	13.7 " "
1936 - 1st "	..	13.4 " "

It should be noted that the figures refer to the mid-month of each quarter, and represent the conditions at the middle of that month. Consequently, the latest figures referred to herein relate to the middle of February, 1936.

The percentages given above show a continuous decline from the peak point (30.0%) in unemployment attained in the 2nd Quarter of 1932, after an almost continuous rise since 1929, when the rate was 9.3 per cent. After remaining fairly constant at 28.0 per cent. to 28.3 per cent. for three quarters - from August, 1931, to February, 1932 - the maximum point was reached in May, 1932, when the proportion of unemployment in the reporting Trade Unions was 30 per cent. of the membership.

From the peak, the proportion of unemployed decreased by 4 per thousand in the third quarter of 1932, and in the two quarters following, the improvement was much more marked, amounting to 15 per 1,000 in the fourth quarter of 1932, and 16 per 1,000 in the first quarter of 1933. The improvement continued until unemployment stood at 13.4 per cent. for February, 1936. This is the lowest percentage of unemployment since November, 1929, when it was 13.1 per cent. Since the maximum point in May, 1932, the rate of unemployment has diminished by 16.6 per cent., or 166 per 1,000 members, i.e., from 30.0 in May, 1932, to 13.4 per cent. in February, 1936.

This improvement since the 2nd Quarter of 1932 has been experienced in all the States in the following order (per 1,000 members):- South Australia, 230; Western Australia, 200; Victoria, 169; Tasmania, 163, New South Wales, 160; Queensland, 114. The more recent improvement during the 1st Quarter, 1936, over the previous quarter was shared by four States in the following order, per 1,000 members:- Tasmania, 26; South Australia, 25; Western Australia, 18; Victoria, 5. The figures for New South Wales and Queensland showed slight rises of 2 per 1,000 members and 8 per 1,000 members, respectively.

The usual tables for Trade Union Unemployment are appended.

AUSTRALIA - Number and Membership of Trade Unions reporting, and Number and Percentage of Unemployed - 1st Quarter, 1929, to 1st Quarter, 1936.

AUSTRALIA	1st Quarter 1929	2nd Quarter 1932	2nd Quarter 1933	2nd Quarter 1934	1st Quarter 1935	3rd Quarter 1935	4th Quarter 1935	1st Quarter 1936
Number of Unions	375	396	394	394	396	395	395	394
Membership ..	420,756	413,742	415,559	422,113	433,116	438,216	439,165	445,294
Unemployed -								
Number ..	39,159	124,068	106,652	88,413	80,548	69,575	59,992	59,621
Percentage ..	9.3	30.0	25.7	20.9	18.6	15.9	13.7	13.4

/STATES -

STATES - Percentage of Members of Trade Unions returned as Unemployed
in each State - 1st Quarter, 1929. to 1st Quarter, 1936.

STATE	1st Quarter 1929 %	2nd Quarter 1932 %	2nd Quarter 1933 %	2nd Quarter 1934 %	1st Quarter 1935 %	3rd Quarter 1935 %	4th Quarter 1935 %	1st Quarter 1936 %
New South Wales ..	9.7	33.2	29.6	25.0	23.6	19.1	17.0	17.2
Victoria ..	8.6	27.7	23.0	18.0	15.0	14.8	11.3	10.8
Queensland ..	7.1	19.9	15.6	12.7	9.8	8.5	7.7	8.5
South Australia ..	13.2	35.2	30.0	25.4	20.7	16.3	14.7	12.2
Western Australia	8.5	30.3	26.0	18.3	15.4	12.5	11.8	10.3
Tasmania ..	8.7	27.4	19.0	17.9	16.7	16.7	13.7	11.1
TOTAL:	9.3	30.0	25.7	20.9	18.6	15.9	13.7	13.4

The above returns are compiled and published substantially on the basis that has been adopted in regard to Trade Union returns since 1911. It is to be noted, however, that the returns relate to members of trade unions embracing only about 20 per cent. of wage-earners, and that for some States these constitute a more representative sample of employment than for others. The percentages include persons unemployed from all causes, other than those unemployed directly as a result of industrial disputes. They may be interpreted as relating to the percentages of the members of unions making returns who are not, according to the records or knowledge of the union Secretary, employed within union callings.

The percentages do not exactly represent the proportion of total unemployment in Australia as a whole, though Census data and other records indicate that they give a reasonable picture of the development of the unemployment crisis in Australia and the recovery therefrom.

In view of the very definite nature of the information on which the indexes of employment and unemployment for New South Wales, and those relating to men for Queensland, are based, these indexes should be the most accurate record available of unemployment in those States.

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